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CIA spied on campus dissidents

Radicals tracked at
Utah, Brown, Boston

By Margaret Gentry
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WASHINGTON — The CIA collected information about political dissidents at Utah State University, Brown University and Boston University in 1970 and 1971, according to newly released documents from the CIA's Operation Chaos.

The 141 pages of CIA files, the first Operation Chaos documents to be made public, also showed that the agency followed the movements of American political dissenters traveling abroad and kept track of foreign visitors who associated with U.S. dissident groups.

A separate batch of 47 documents showed that the CIA, as late as November 1974, was sending information about the political activities of Socialist Workers Party leader Peter Camejo to one of its overseas stations.

The CIA released parts of Camejo's dossier to him after he requested it under the Freedom of Information Act.

The agency released the Operation Chaos files to the Socialist Workers Party in response to a court order in the party's multimillion-dollar damage suit against the CIA and the FBI for allegedly illegal harassment.

The charter under which the CIA was established after World War II forbids it from engaging in any intelligence work directed at domestic policies.

Operation Chaos, reported on last June by the Rockefeller Commission on CIA activities, was a seven-year espionage program by the CIA against domestic political dissidents.

Besides infiltrating agents into anti-war and black movements, the operation compiled dossiers on 13,000 individuals and cross-indexed information on 300,000 individuals and organizations with other law enforcement agencies.

The Rockefeller Commission report said that Operation Chaos agents "were specifically used to collect domestic intelligence" on only three occasions. But the report said CIA recruits who learned how to spy by infiltrating New Left groups in the United States were instructed to report information "acquired incidentally" about dissident activities.

A previously released CIA memo from 1973, seven months before Chaos reportedly was terminated, said Chaos "is restricted to the collection abroad of information on foreign activities related to domestic matters." The CIA "is not to be directly engaged in the surveillance or other action against" Americans overseas, the memo said.

But some 50 pages of the files now released show that the CIA regularly received information from "sources" about the overseas travels and writings of Socialist Workers leader Andrew Pulley in 1970.

The heavily censored Chaos files included a report on a Brown University seminar sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance, youth affiliate of the Socialist Workers.

"Black militants of undetermined political connections attended" the February 1970 seminar on the Mideast crisis, the unsigned memo said. "According to a source in attendance, the meeting and speaker were oriented toward inciting revolution and anarchy in the U. S.," the memo said.

Another Chaos file was labeled "radical activity on campus of Utah State University." A memo dated May 3, 1971, said the campus "is more politically active than most in the state. There is an active chapter of the Young Socialist Alliance."

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